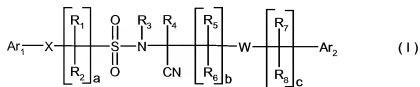


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (Currently amended): A compound of the general formula



including the optical isomers thereof and mixtures of such isomers, wherein

Ar₁ and Ar₂ independently of each other stand for an optionally substituted phenyl ~~aryl or heteroaryl~~ group,

R₁ and R₂ stand independently of each other for hydrogen, optionally substituted C₁-C₅alkyl, optionally substituted C₂-C₅alkenyl, C₂-C₅alkynyl or optionally substituted C₃-C₆cycloalkyl;

R₃ designates hydrogen, C₃-C₅alkenyl, C₃-C₅alkynyl or optionally substituted C₁-C₅alkyl;

R₄ is optionally substituted C₁-C₅alkyl, optionally substituted C₂-C₅alkenyl, C₂-C₅alkynyl or optionally substituted C₃-C₆cycloalkyl;

R₅ and R₆ are independently of each other hydrogen or optionally substituted C₁-C₅alkyl, optionally substituted C₂-C₅alkenyl, C₂-C₅alkynyl or optionally substituted C₃-C₆cycloalkyl;

R₇ and R₈ are independently of each other hydrogen or optionally substituted C₁-C₅alkyl, optionally substituted C₂-C₅alkenyl, C₂-C₅alkynyl or optionally substituted C₃-C₆cycloalkyl;

W designates a bridge selected from -O-, -S(O)_m- or -NR₃- ;

X designates a direct bond or a bridge selected from -O-, -S(O)_m- or -NR₃- ;

a and b independently of each other stand for a number 1, 2 or 3; and

c and m independently of each other stand for a number zero, 1 or 2.

Claim 2 (Currently amended): A compound according to claim 1 wherein

Ar₁ stands for a phenyl ~~an aryl~~ group which is optionally substituted with n radicals independently selected from R₉; ~~or stands for a 5 ring membered heteroaryl group comprising as ring members 1 to 4 heteroatoms selected from nitrogen, oxygen or sulfur and being optionally substituted with n radicals independently selected from R₄₄;~~ ~~or stands for a 6 ring membered heteroaryl group comprising as ring members 1 to 4 heteroatoms selected from nitrogen, oxygen or sulfur and being optionally substituted with n radicals independently selected from R₄₄;~~ Ar₂ stands for a phenyl ~~an aryl~~ group which is optionally substituted with n radicals independently selected from R₉ and from one radical R₁₀; ~~or stands for a 5 ring membered heteroaryl group comprising as ring members 1 to~~

~~4 heteroatoms selected from nitrogen, oxygen or sulfur and being optionally substituted with n radicals independently selected from R₄₄, or stands for a 6 ring-membered heteroaryl group comprising as ring members 1 to 4 heteroatoms selected from nitrogen, oxygen or sulfur, and being optionally substituted with n radicals independently selected from R₄₄, or stands for a fused bicyclic heteroaryl group comprising as ring members 1 to 4 heteroatoms selected from nitrogen, oxygen or sulfur, and being composed from the 5 ring- or 6 ring-membered heteroaryl groups as defined for Ar₂ with an annellated phenyl ring or with an annellated second 6 ring-membered heteroaryl, each ring and the bicyclic heteroaryl being optionally substituted with n radicals independently selected from R₄₄;~~

R₁ and R₂ stand independently of each other for hydrogen or C₁-C₅alkyl optionally substituted by halogen, C₁-C₃alkoxy or -NR₁₂R₁₃; or stand for C₂-C₅alkenyl optionally substituted by halogen or C₁-C₃alkoxy; or stand for C₂-C₅alkynyl; or stand for C₃-C₆cycloalkyl optionally substituted by halogen, C₁-C₃alkoxy; C₁-C₃alkyl or -NR₁₂R₁₃;

R₃ designates hydrogen, C₃-C₅alkenyl, C₃-C₅alkynyl or C₁-C₃alkyl optionally substituted by C₁-C₃alkoxy; C₃-C₅alkenyloxy or C₃-C₅alkynyloxy;

R₄ is C₁-C₅alkyl optionally substituted by halogen, C₁-C₃alkoxy or -NR₁₂R₁₃; or is C₂-C₅alkenyl optionally substituted by halogen or C₁-C₃alkoxy; or is C₂-C₅alkynyl; or is C₃-C₆cycloalkyl optionally substituted by halogen, C₁-C₃alkoxy or C₁-C₃alkyl;

R₅ and R₆ are independently of each other hydrogen or C₁-C₅alkyl optionally substituted by halogen, C₁-C₃alkoxy or -NR₁₂R₁₃; or are C₂-C₅alkenyl optionally substituted by halogen or C₁-C₃alkoxy; or are C₂-C₅alkynyl; or are C₃-C₆cycloalkyl optionally substituted by halogen, C₁-C₃alkoxy; C₁-C₃alkyl or -NR₁₂R₁₃;

R₇ and R₈ are independently of each other hydrogen or C₁-C₅alkyl optionally substituted by halogen, C₁-C₃alkoxy or -NR₁₂R₁₃; or are C₂-C₅alkenyl optionally substituted by halogen or C₁-C₃alkoxy; or are C₂-C₅alkynyl; or are C₃-C₆cycloalkyl optionally substituted by halogen, C₁-C₃alkoxy; C₁-C₃alkyl or -NR₁₂R₁₃;

R₉ and R'₉ independently of each other stand for C₁-C₅alkyl optionally substituted by halogen, C₁-C₄alkoxy, -NR₁₂R₁₃, -CO-R₁₄ or the acyclic or cyclic ketals and acetals of -CO-R₁₄, by a -X-aryl which is optionally substituted by halogen, C₁-C₄alkyl, C₁-C₄haloalkyl, C₁-C₄alkoxy, -CN, -NO₂, -NR₁₂R₁₃, -CO-R₁₄ or the acyclic or cyclic ketals and acetals of -CO-R₁₄; by a -X-linked-5- or 6-ring-membered heteroaryl group optionally substituted by halogen, C₁-C₄alkyl, C₁-C₄haloalkyl, C₁-C₄alkoxy, -CN, -NO₂, -NR₁₂R₁₃, -CO-R₁₄ or the acyclic or cyclic ketals and acetals of -CO-R₁₄; or stand for C₃-C₆cycloalkyl, optionally substituted by halogen, hydroxy, =O, C₁-C₄alkoxy, NR₁₂R₁₃; or

stand for C₁-C₄alkoxy optionally substituted by halogen, C₁-C₄alkoxy, by -X-aryl which is optionally substituted by halogen, C₁-C₄alkyl, C₁-C₄haloalkyl, C₁-C₄alkoxy, -CN, -NO₂, -NR₁₂R₁₃, -CO-R₁₄ or the acyclic or cyclic ketals and acetals of -CO-R₁₄; by a X-linked 5- or 6-ring-membered heteroaryl group optionally substituted by halogen, C₁-C₄alkyl, C₁-C₄haloalkyl, C₁-C₄alkoxy, -CN, -NO₂, -NR₁₂R₁₃, -CO-R₁₄ or the acyclic or cyclic ketals and acetals of -CO-R₁₄; or stand for C₂-C₅alkenyl optionally substituted by halogen or aryl; or stand for C₂-C₅alkynyl optionally substituted by halogen, tri-alkyl-silyl or aryl; or stand for C₂-C₅alkenyloxy optionally substituted by halogen or aryl; or stand for C₂-C₅alkynyloxy optionally substituted by halogen, tri-alkyl-silyl or aryl; or stand for C₃-C₆cycloalkoxy optionally substituted by C₁-C₃alkyl, halogen or C₁-C₄alkoxy; or stand for halogen; or stand for -NR₁₂R₁₃, or stand for -NR₂-CO-R₁₂; or stand for -NR₂-CO-OR₁₂; or stand for -NR₂-CO-NR₈R₉; or stand for -NR₂-CO-SR₁₂; or stand for -NR₂-CS-OR₁₂; or stand for -NR₂-CS-NR₈R₉; or stand for -NR₂-CS-SR₁₂; or stand for -NR₂-C(=N-O-R₁₂)-S-OR₁₂; or stand for -NR₂-C(=N-O-R₁₂)-NR₈R₉; or stand for -NR₂-C(=N-O-R₁₂)-SR₁₂; or stand for -S(O)_p-C₁-C₄alkyl optionally substituted by halogen; or stand for -NR₂-SO₂-NR₈R₉; or stand for nitro, for cyano or for -CS-NH₂;

R₁₀ stands for hydrogen; or stands for -X-aryl which is optionally substituted by halogen, C₁-C₄alkyl, C₁-C₄haloalkyl, C₁-C₄alkoxy, -CN, -NO₂, -NR₁₂R₁₃, -CO-R₁₄ or the acyclic or cyclic ketals and acetals of -CO-R₁₄; or stands for a X-linked 5-membered aromatic or non-aromatic heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen, oxygen or sulfur as ring members and being optionally substituted by halogen, C₁-C₄alkyl, C₁-C₄haloalkyl, C₁-C₄alkoxy, -CN, -NO₂, -NR₁₂R₁₃, -CO-R₁₄ or the acyclic or cyclic ketals and acetals of -CO-R₁₄; or stands for a X-linked 6-membered aromatic or non-aromatic heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen, oxygen or sulfur as ring members and being optionally substituted by halogen, C₁-C₄alkyl, C₁-C₄haloalkyl, C₁-C₄alkoxy, -CN, -NO₂, -NR₁₂R₁₃, -CO-R₁₄ or the acyclic or cyclic ketals and acetals of -CO-R₁₄; or stands for -CO-R₁₄ or the acyclic or cyclic ketals and acetals of -CO-R₁₄; or stands for -O-CO-R₁₄; or stands for -C(=N-O-R₁₂)-R₁₄; R₁₀ and one R'₉ together form a 3- or 4-membered non-aromatic bridge forming an annellated ring which may contain a carbonyl function or nitrogen, oxygen or sulfur as ring members and is optionally substituted by C₁-C₃alkyl;

~~R₁₄ is hydrogen, halogen, C₁-C₄alkyl, C₁-C₄haloalkyl, C₁-C₄alkoxy, -NR₁₂R₁₃, -NO₂, -CN, -CO-R₁₄, or the acyclic or cyclic ketals and acetals of -CO-R₁₄;~~

W designates a bridge selected from -O-, -S(O)_m- or -NR₃-;

X designates a direct bond or a bridge selected from -O-, -S(O)_m- or -NR₃-;

a stands for a number 1, 2 or 3;

- b stands for a number 1, 2 or 3;
 c stands for a number zero, 1 or 2;
 m stands for a number zero, 1 or 2;
 n stands for a number 1 or 2;
 p stands for a number 0, 1 or 2;

R₁₂ and R₁₃ independently of each other stand for hydrogen; C₁–C₅alkyl optionally substituted by halogen, C₁–C₄haloalkyl, C₁–C₄alkoxy, C₁–C₄alkylamino, di(C₁–C₄alkyl)amino, or aryl which in turn is optionally substituted by halogen, C₁–C₄alkyl, C₁–C₄haloalkyl, C₁–C₄alkoxy or -CN; or stand for C₃–C₅alkenyl optionally substituted by halogen, C₁–C₄haloalkyl, C₁–C₄alkoxy, C₁–C₄alkylamino, di(C₁–C₄alkyl)amino, or aryl which in turn is optionally substituted by halogen, C₁–C₄alkyl, C₁–C₄haloalkyl, C₁–C₄alkoxy or -CN; or stand for C₃–C₅alkynyl optionally substituted by halogen, C₁–C₄haloalkyl, C₁–C₄alkoxy, C₁–C₄alkylamino, di(C₁–C₄alkyl)amino, or aryl which in turn is optionally substituted by halogen, C₁–C₄alkyl, C₁–C₄haloalkyl, C₁–C₄alkoxy or -CN; or together form a 5-ring-membered non-aromatic carbocyclic ring; or together form a 6-ring-membered non-aromatic carbocyclic ring which is interrupted by -O- or -N(C₁–C₄alkyl)-;

R₁₄ stands for C₁–C₅alkyl optionally substituted by halogen, C₁–C₄alkoxy, C₁–C₄alkylamino, di(C₁–C₄alkyl)amino; aryl which in turn is optionally substituted by halogen, C₁–C₄alkyl, C₁–C₄haloalkyl, C₁–C₄alkoxy, -CN, -NO₂, C₁–C₄alkylamino, di(C₁–C₄alkyl)amino or C₁–C₄alkylcarbonyl, C₁–C₄alkoxycarbonyl, C₁–C₄alkylaminocarbonyl or di(C₁–C₄alkyl)aminocarbonyl; or by a 5- or 6-ring hetero-aromatic ring which in turn is optionally substituted by halogen, C₁–C₄alkyl, C₁–C₄haloalkyl, C₁–C₄alkoxy, -CN, -NO₂, C₁–C₄alkylamino, di(C₁–C₄alkyl)amino, C₁–C₄alkylcarbonyl, C₁–C₄alkoxycarbonyl, C₁–C₄alkylaminocarbonyl or di-(C₁–C₄alkyl)aminocarbonyl; or stands for C₃–C₆cycloalkyl optionally substituted by halogen, hydroxy, =O, C₁–C₄alkoxy or C₁–C₄alkylamino, di(C₁–C₄alkyl)amino; or stands for C₁–C₄alkoxy optionally substituted by halogen, C₁–C₄alkoxy; C₁–C₄alkylamino, di(C₁–C₄alkyl)amino; or stands for phenyl which is optionally substituted by halogen, C₁–C₄alkyl, C₁–C₄haloalkyl, C₁–C₄alkoxy, -CN, -NO₂, C₁–C₄alkylamino, di(C₁–C₄alkyl)amino, C₁–C₄alkylcarbonyl, C₁–C₄alkoxycarbonyl, C₁–C₄alkylaminocarbonyl or di-(C₁–C₄alkyl)aminocarbonyl; or stands for a 5- or 6-ring membered heteroaryl comprising nitrogen, oxygen or sulfur as ring members and being optionally substituted by halogen, C₁–C₄alkyl, C₁–C₄haloalkyl; C₁–C₄alkoxy, -CN, -NO₂, C₁–C₄alkylamino, di(C₁–C₄alkyl)amino, C₁–C₄alkylcarbonyl, C₁–C₄alkoxycarbonyl, C₁–C₄alkylaminocarbonyl or di-(C₁–C₄alkyl)aminocarbonyl.

Claim 3 (Previously presented): A compound according to claim 1, wherein Ar₁ and Ar₂ independently of each other stand for optionally substituted phenyl; and the optional substituents R₉ of Ar₁ are preferably selected from the group comprising halogen, C₁-C₄alkyl, C₁-C₄haloalkyl, C₁-C₄alkoxy, C₁-C₄haloalkoxy, C₃-C₆cycloalkyl, -CN and -CO-R₁₄; and the optional substituents R'₉ of Ar₂ are preferably selected from the group comprising halogen, C₁-C₄alkyl, C₁-C₄haloalkyl, C₁-C₄alkoxy, C₁-C₄haloalkoxy, C₃-C₆cycloalkyl, -CN, -CO-R₁₄, -NR₁₂R₁₃, -NR₂-CO-R₁₂, -NR₃-CO-OR₁₂, -NR₂-CO-NR₈R₉, -NR₂-CO-SR₁₂, -NR₂-CS-OR₁₂, -NR₂-CS-NR₈R₉, -NR₂-CS-SR₁₂, -S(O)_p-C₁-C₄alkyl, -S(O)_p-C₁-C₄haloalkyl, -NR₂-SO₂-NR₈R₉, nitro, cyano and -CS-NH₂; and the optional substituent R₁₀ on Ar₂ is selected from optionally substituted phenyl, optionally substituted imidazolyl, optionally substituted thiazolyloxy, optionally substituted pyridyloxy, optionally substituted pyridyl, optionally substituted pyrimidinyl, optionally substituted pyrimidinyl, optionally substituted oxadiazolyl, optionally substituted triazolyl, optionally substituted pyrazolyl, optionally substituted oxadiazolyloxy, optionally substituted triazolyloxy and optionally substituted pyrazolyloxy.

Claim 4 (Original): A compound of formula I according to claim 1 wherein Ar₁ and Ar₂ independently stand for optionally substituted ~~phenyl~~ aryl groups; and the optional substituents R₉ of Ar₁ are preferably selected from the group comprising halogen, C₁-C₄alkyl, C₁-C₄haloalkyl, C₁-C₄alkoxy, C₁-C₄haloalkoxy, C₃-C₆cycloalkyl, -CN and -CO-R₁₄; and the optional substituents R'₉ of Ar₂ are preferably selected from the group comprising halogen, C₁-C₄alkyl, C₁-C₄haloalkyl, C₁-C₄alkoxy, C₁-C₄haloalkoxy, C₃-C₆cycloalkyl, -CN, -CO-R₁₄, -NR₁₂R₁₃, -NR₂-CO-R₁₂, -NR₃-CO-OR₁₂, -NR₂-CO-NR₈R₉, -NR₂-CO-SR₁₂, -NR₂-CS-OR₁₂, -NR₂-CS-NR₈R₉, -NR₂-CS-SR₁₂, -S(O)_p-C₁-C₄alkyl, -S(O)_p-C₁-C₄haloalkyl, -NR₂-SO₂-NR₈R₉, nitro, cyano and -CS-NH₂; and the optional substituent R₁₀ on Ar₂ is selected from halogen, C₁-C₄alkyl, C₁-C₄haloalkyl, C₁-C₄alkoxy, -CN, -NO₂, -NR₁₂R₁₃, -CO-R₁₄ and the acyclic or cyclic ketals and acetals of -CO-R₁₄; -O-CO-R₁₄, optionally substituted phenyl, optionally substituted imidazolyl, optionally substituted thiazolyloxy, optionally substituted pyridyloxy, optionally substituted pyridyl, optionally substituted pyrimidinyl, optionally substituted pyrimidinyl, optionally substituted oxadiazolyl, optionally substituted triazolyl, optionally substituted pyrazolyl, optionally substituted oxadiazolyloxy, optionally substituted triazolyloxy and optionally substituted pyrazolyloxy; and R₁, R₂, R₅, R₆, R₇ and R₈ independently of each other are hydrogen or methyl; and R₃ is hydrogen or C₁-C₄alkyl optionally substituted with C₁-C₄alkoxy, C₃-C₄alkenyl, or

C₃-C₄alkynyloxy; and

R₄ is hydrogen or C₁-C₄alkyl optionally substituted with halogen, C₁-C₃alkoxy, C₁-C₃alkylamino or di-C₁-C₃alkylamino; and

W is -O-; and

X is a direct bond; and

the suffixes (a) and (b) designate the number 1; and

the suffix (c) stands for the number zero.

Claim 5 (Original): A compound of formula I according to claim 1 wherein

Ar₁ and Ar₂ independently of each other stand for optionally substituted phenyl; and

the optional substituents R₉ and R'₉ of Ar₁ and Ar₂ are selected from the group comprising C₁-C₄alkyl, C₁-C₄haloalkyl, C₁-C₄alkoxy, C₁-C₄haloalkoxy and C₃-C₆cycloalkyl; and

the optional substituent R₁₀ on Ar₂ is selected from -CO-C₁-C₄alkyl, -CO-C₁-C₄alkoxy, -O-CO-C₁-C₄alkyl, optionally substituted phenyl, optionally substituted phenoxy, optionally substituted imidazolyl, optionally substituted imidazolylloxy, optionally substituted thiazolylloxy, optionally substituted thiazolyl, optionally substituted thiadiazolylloxy, optionally substituted thiadiazolyl, optionally substituted pyridylloxy, optionally substituted pyridyl, optionally substituted pyrimidinylloxy, optionally substituted pyrimidinyl, optionally substituted oxadiazolyl, optionally substituted oxadiazolylloxy, optionally substituted triazolyl, optionally substituted triazolylloxy and optionally substituted pyrazolylloxy; and

R₁ and R₅ are independently C₁-C₄alkyl and R₂ and R₆ are hydrogen; and

R₃ is hydrogen, C₁-C₄alkyl or C₁-C₄alkoxy-C₁-C₄alkyl; and

R₄ is C₁-C₄alkyl or C₁-C₄haloalkyl; and

W is -O-; and

X is a direct bond; and

the suffixes (a) and (b) designate the number 1; and

the suffix (c) stands for the number zero.

Claim 6 (Previously presented): A compound of formula I according to claim 1, wherein Ar₁ and Ar₂

independently of each other stand for optionally substituted phenyl; and the optional substituents R₉ and R'₉ of Ar₁ and Ar₂ are selected from the group comprising bromo, chloro, fluoro, iodo, cyano, hydroxy, amino, nitro, methyl, ethyl, propyl, isopropyl, methoxy, ethoxy, propoxy, isopropoxy, allyloxy, propargyloxy, benzyloxy, trifluoromethyl, trifluoromethoxy, 2-cyano-2-methyl-butylloxy,

methylsulfonyl, methylsulfinyl, methylthio, cyclopentyl, cyclohexyl, aminocarbonylmethyl, methoximinoethyl, aminocarbonyl, butylcarbonylamino, tert-butylcarbonylamino, triazol-1-ylmethyl, 1,2,4-triazol-1-ylmethyl, N-morpholinocarbonylamino, aminocarbonyloxy-ethoxy, morpholinocarbonyloxyethoxy and cyanopyridyloxyethoxy; and
the optional substituent R₁₀ on Ar₂ is selected from aminocarbonyl, dimethylaminocarbonyl, acetyl, propionyl, acetoxymethyl, methoxycarbonyl, ethoxycarbonyl, benzoyl, methoximinoethyl, 1-imidazolyl, 5-(3-methyl-1,2,4-thiadiazolyloxy), 2-pyridyl, 2-pyridyloxy, 4-pyrimidinyl, 2-(3,5-dichloropyridyloxy), 2-(4,6-dichloropyridyloxy), 2-(4,6-dimethoxypyrimidinylthio), 2-oxadiazolyl, 2-(5-methyl-oxadiazolyl), 2-(5-ethyl-oxadiazolyl), 1-triazolyl, 1-pyrazolyl, 1-(3,4-dimethylpyrazolyl), 4-(2-methylthiazolyl), 2-(1,3,4-oxdiazolyl), N-pyrrolidin-2-onyl, and 2-quinoxalyl, and
R₁ and R₅ are independently C₁-C₄alkyl and R₂ and R₆ are hydrogen; and
R₃ is hydrogen, C₁-C₄alkyl or C₁-C₄alkoxy-C₁-C₄alkyl; and
R₄ is C₁-C₄alkyl or C₁-C₄haloalkyl; and
W is -O-; and
X is a direct bond; and
the suffixes (a) and (b) designate the number 1; and
the suffix (c) stands for the number zero.

Claim 7 (Original): A compound according to claim 1, wherein

Ar₁ and Ar₂ independently of each other stand for optionally substituted phenyl; and
the optional substituents R₉ and R'₉ of Ar₁ and Ar₂ are selected from the group comprising bromo, chloro, fluoro, methyl, ethyl, methoxy, ethoxy, trifluoromethyl and trifluoromethoxy; and
the optional substituent R₁₀ on Ar₂ is selected from aminocarbonyl, acetyl, methoxycarbonyl, ethoxycarbonyl, 1-imidazolyl, 5-(3-methyl-1,2,4-thiadiazolyloxy), 2-pyridyl, 2-pyridyloxy, 4-pyrimidinyl, 2-(3,5-dichloropyridyloxy), 2-(4,6-dimethoxypyrimidinylthio), 2-oxadiazolyl, 2-(5-methyl-oxadiazolyl), 2-(5-ethyl-oxadiazolyl), 1-triazolyl, 1-pyrazolyl, 4-(2-methylthiazolyl), 2-(1,3,4-oxdiazolyl), and N-pyrrolidin-2-onyl, and
R₁ and R₅ are methyl and R₂ and R₆ are hydrogen; and
R₃ is hydrogen, methyl, ethyl, propyl, ethoxymethyl or methoxymethyl, and
R₄ is methyl, ethyl, propyl or fluoromethyl; and
W is -O-; and
X is a direct bond; and
the suffixes (a) and (b) designate the number 1; and

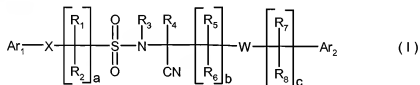
the suffix (c) stands for the number zero.

Claim 8 (Original): A compound of formula I according to claim 1 selected from the group comprising

2-[(4-chlorophenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-propionitrile,
2-[(4-chlorophenoxy)-methyl]-2-[(2-chlorophenyl)-methyl]-sulfonylamino-propionitrile,
2-[(4-chlorophenoxy)-methyl]-2-[(2-fluorophenyl)-methyl]-sulfonylamino-propionitrile,
2-[(4-trifluoromethoxyphenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-propionitrile,
2-[(4-chloro-3-methylphenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-propionitrile,
2-[(4-chlorophenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-butyronitrile,
2-[(4-chlorophenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-3-methoxy-propionitrile,
2-[(4-acetylphenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-propionitrile,
2-[(4-methoxyphenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-propionitrile,
2-[(4-acetylphenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-butyronitrile,
2-[(4-cyanophenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-propionitrile,
(-)-2-[(4-cyanophenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-propionitrile,
2-[(4-propionylphenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-propionitrile,
2-[(4-ethoxyphenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-propionitrile,
2-[(4-[1,2,4]triazol-1-yl-phenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-propionitrile,
2-[(4-imidazol-1-yl-phenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-propionitrile,
2-[(4-cyanophenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-butyronitrile,
2-[(4-[1,3,4]oxadiazol-4-yl-phenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-propionitrile,
2-[(4-methoxyphenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-butyronitrile,
2-[(4-ethoxyphenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-butyronitrile,
(-)-2-[(4-ethoxyphenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-butyronitrile,
2-[(4-[1,2,4]triazol-1-yl-phenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-butyronitrile,
2-[(4-methoxycarbonylphenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-propionitrile,
2-[(4-propionylphenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-butyronitrile,
2-[(4-chlorophenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-3-fluoro-propionitrile,
2-[(4-(2-methyl-thiazol-4-yl)-phenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-butyronitrile,
2-[(4-pyrazol-1-yl-phenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-butyronitrile,
2-(5-oxo-5,6,7,8-tetrahydronaphth-2-yl-oxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-butyronitrile,
2-[(4-chloro-phenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-3-methyl-butyronitrile,

2-[(4-iso-propyl-phenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-butyronitrile,
 2-[(4-nitro-phenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-butyronitrile,
 2-[(4-cyano-phenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-butyronitrile,
 2-[(3-fluoro-4-propionyl-phenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-propionitrile,
 (-)-2-[(4-[1,2,4]triazol-1-yl-phenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-butyronitrile, and
 (-)-2-[(4-acetylphenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-propionitrile.

Claim 9 (Currently amended): A process for the preparation of a compound of formula I ~~according to claim 4,~~



including the optical isomers thereof and mixtures of such isomers, wherein

Ar₁ and Ar₂ independently of each other stand for an optionally substituted phenyl group,

R₁ and R₂ stand independently of each other for hydrogen, optionally substituted C₁-C₆alkyl,

optionally substituted C₂-C₆alkenyl, C₂-C₆alkynyl or optionally substituted C₃-C₆cycloalkyl;

R₃ designates hydrogen, C₃-C₆alkenyl, C₃-C₆alkynyl or optionally substituted C₁-C₆alkyl;

R₄ is optionally substituted C₁-C₆alkyl, optionally substituted C₂-C₆alkenyl, C₂-C₆alkynyl or optionally substituted C₃-C₆cycloalkyl;

R₅ and R₆ are independently of each other hydrogen or optionally substituted C₁-C₆alkyl, optionally substituted C₂-C₆alkenyl, C₂-C₆alkynyl or optionally substituted C₃-C₆cycloalkyl;

R₇ and R₈ are independently of each other hydrogen or optionally substituted C₁-C₆alkyl, optionally substituted C₂-C₆alkenyl, C₂-C₆alkynyl or optionally substituted C₃-C₆cycloalkyl;

W designates a bridge selected from -O-, -S(O)_m- or -NR₃-;

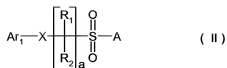
X designates a direct bond or a bridge selected from -O-, -S(O)_m- or -NR₃-;

a and b independently of each other stand for a number 1, 2 or 3; and

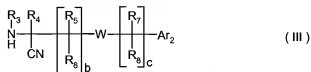
c and m independently of each other stand for a number zero, 1 or 2;

which comprises reacting

a) reacting the sulfonylating agent of formula II

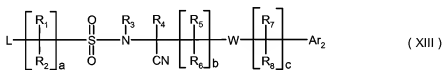


wherein Ar_1 , a, X and R_1 to R_2 are defined as under formula I, and A stands for a leaving group like an anhydride, i.e. $-\text{O}-\text{SO}_2-(\text{CR}_3\text{R}_4)_n-\text{X}-\text{Ar}_3$ or $-\text{O}-\text{CO}-\text{C}_4\text{H}_9-\text{C}_4\text{alkyl}$, but preferably for halogen, especially bromine or more preferably chlorine, with an amino-acetonitrile of formula III



wherein Ar_2 , b, c, W and R_5 to R_8 are defined as under formula I, or

b) coupling the reacting the compound of formula XIII



wherein Ar_1 , Ar_2 , a, b, c, W and R_4 to R_8 are defined as under formula I and L is a leaving group such as e.g. halogen, preferably chlorine, bromine or iodine or a sulfonyloxy group such as e.g. methylsulfonyloxy, tolylsulfonyloxy or trifluoromethylsulfonyloxy group, is coupled with a compound of formula XIV



wherein Ar_1 is defined as under formula I and X' is either an anionic radical species of X such as O^- , S^- , $\text{S}(\text{O})_2^-$ combined with an alkaline- or earthalkaline- metal cation as counterion or is defined as X-H such as OH, SH, NHR₂ if at the same time the reaction is generally carried out in the presence of a base such as alkaline-, earthalkaline carbonates or hydrogencarbonates such as e.g. sodium or potassium carbonate, sodium or potassium hydrogen carbonate, cesium carbonate or an agent capable of scavenging the formed acid.

Claim 10 (Original): A composition for controlling and protecting against phytopathogenic microorganisms, comprising a compound of formula I according to claim 1 as active ingredient together with a suitable carrier.

Claim 11 (Canceled)

Claim 12 (Original): A method of controlling and preventing an infestation of crop plants by phytopathogenic ~~fungi~~ microorganisms, which comprises the application of a compound of formula I according to claim 1 as active ingredient to the plant, to parts of plants or to the locus thereof.

Claim 13 (Canceled)